

Communities of Medina and Hunts Point

# Do It Yourself “Crime Prevention”



**Identity Theft Information,  
Quick Reference Numbers,  
Personal Safety,  
Burglary Prevention,  
Internet Safety,  
and more.....**

Residents,

With the assistance of the Washington State Crime Prevention Association and Pemco Insurance Company, this *Do It Yourself Crime Prevention Handbook* was made possible.

When criminals violate our homes and communities, we lose more than belongings, we lose our freedom – the freedom to feel safe walking city streets after dark, going to a park alone, or letting our children walk home from school. We even lose the ability to feel secure in our own homes. The Medina Police Department, no matter how effective, can't protect us completely.

We can't always get back what crime takes away but we can take back our freedom to feel safe. This “Do It Yourself” handbook gives us the tools we need to ensure greater security for ourselves and our families. Do your part: Go over the checklists on burglary prevention, personal safety, and child safety, and make the recommended changes.

You can help prevent crime in other ways, as well. Start with your own kids, by supporting local schools and getting involved in activities. In the community, you can take part neighborhood watch or volunteer with the City to assist in emergencies.

By working together, we can empower ourselves to make our streets safe for everyone. Please contact the police department if you have any questions or want to get involved.

Sincerely,

Stephen R. Burns  
Medina Chief of Police

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## HOME SECURITY:

Burglary is a crime that threatens all homes, but especially those which provide criminals with the “opportunity” to intrude, steal and escape undetected. There are three primary strategies you can employ to minimize the burglar's opportunity:

1. Physical Security
2. Alarms
3. Block Watch

### Physical Security

#### **Interior Lighting:**

When you are away from home, keep some interior lights on. This creates the appearance that someone is home. Use a timer to turn the lights off and on at normal hours. A radio playing adds to the illusion that the home is occupied.

#### **Exterior Doors:**

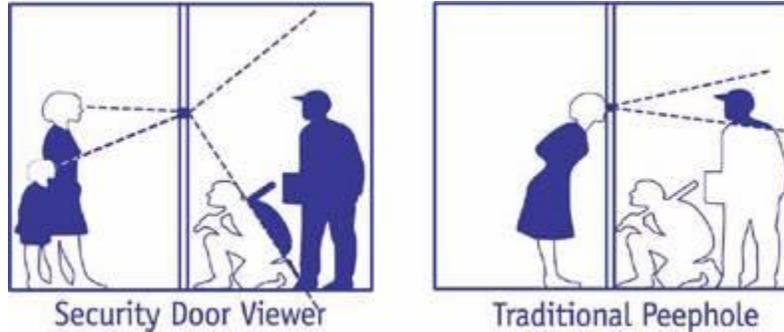
Install solid-core wood doors with rugged frames that cannot be spread apart with a pry bar. A single cylinder deadbolt with a one inch throw (the length of the deadbolt when protruding from the faceplate—example shown below), in addition to the key-in-the-knob lock, is essential.



#### **Through Door Viewers:**

In order to avoid opening your door without knowing who is there, a viewing device is recommended. The best solution is to install a through-door viewer (or peephole), a miniature telescope with a wide angle (220 degree) lens to let you see someone standing to one side of the door. There are also digital camera options available. With a wide-angle viewer, you can gain a wider image of whom or what is on the other side

of the door (see diagram below).



### Garages:

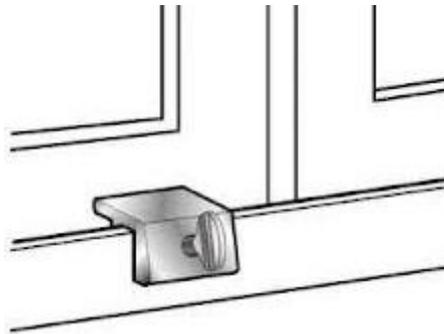
Always keep garage doors closed and **locked**. There is no need to advertise your absence by showing the public your empty garage. A burglar in your garage has access to expensive tools and ladders and can often work on your home undetected. The burglar may drive right into your garage, close the door and load up the goods, or break into your house from the garage by using your tools to force entry.

The entrance door between a garage and the home should be a solid-core wooden or metal door with a single cylinder deadbolt (see previous section on exterior doors). As most garage doors contain less than satisfactory locking devices, you may wish to have a better grade installed. In addition, if you have an overhead garage door, you can increase security by drilling a hole in one of the tracks or door or both and placing a hook or other device in the hole to stop the door from being opened.

You may also consider installing an automatic garage door opener. They allow you to stay in the safety of your vehicle until the garage door opens instead of having to get out of your vehicle to open it. Additionally, they act as a barrier to forced entry, automatically “locking” your garage doors when they close, and may also be disconnected from the power source if there is a power outage or if the house is unoccupied for a period of time. However, automatic garage doors may open in reaction to a stray signal, such as another garage door opener of a neighbor or strategic prowler. Find out whether the unit you are considering purchasing will filter unwanted signals.

## **Windows:**

Windows should have auxiliary locking devices (example shown below). Keep your windows closed and locked when you are away. Screens and storm windows should be securely fastened to the structure.



## **Landscaping:**

Shrubs that provide you with privacy also give a burglar a place to hide. Prune bushes down to two feet or trim trees up at least four feet. Also, keep bushes, shrubs, and trees trimmed back from windows, doors, and walkways. Avoid landscaping that may create blind spots or places for potential offenders to hide. Maintain your property with your landscaping and fencing, removing any litter or garbage—burglars are more likely to strike in neighborhoods that are run-down or less taken care of. When possible, use walkways and landscaping to guide people to the main entrance of the home.

## **Exterior Lighting:**

Lighting is considered one of the best deterrents to burglary. A 40 watt light at each entrance, including the garage, will provide you with both safety and security and will not be wasting our nation's energy when used in conjunction with a timer or sensor.

**Time, noise, and light** are a burglar's worst enemy.

High pressure sodium lights, which cause less light pollution, and mercury vapor lights, which are more energy efficient, attached to timers are very effective tools that prevent trouble. These exterior forms of lighting also provide evenly distributed lighting and reduce patches of darkness, making a potential intruder or visitor more easily distinguishable. Passive infrared sensors that turn lights on when movement is detected are also available. They are excellent for enclosed backyards, sidewalks or driveways. However, they can be cumbersome when the area has a lot of foot traffic or animals. Any of these items can be purchased at the closest hardware store.

### **Interior Lighting:**

During hours of darkness, and prior to a normal bedtime hour, a home should have lights on in various rooms. A home not showing any interior lights will give the appearance of being unoccupied and could attract the unwanted attention of a burglar. Similarly, a home owner who leaves lights on when absent for a weekend or longer will attract attention to the home during the night because all other homes in the area are in darkness. Timers for interior lights can also be found at any local hardware store.

### **Sliding Doors and Windows:**

Exterior sliding doors and windows have a number of security problems in common. Many glass doors and sliding windows have flimsy locks that are easily pried or even juggled open.

1. If the door or window slides on an inside track, you may use a metal rod or cut down a length of wooden dowel to fit snugly along the bottom track to prevent the door from being forced open.
2. A "Charlie Bar" is a more permanent and visible means of preventing lateral movement. They are adjustable rods meant to keep windows and doors closed from the inside. Some models are designed to fit an outside sliding door panel as well.
3. Some doors and windows can be secured with a pin. Inspect your door or window in the fully-closed position. If the frame permits drilling, drill a hole through the outside frame and halfway through the sliding one. Slide in to place a pin or sturdy nail that fits the hole snugly to prevent the door or window from being forced up or back. Be careful when drilling through the frame that you don't damage the thermal seal or the glass. Fire safety requires that pin locks be installed at the bottom of a window, not at the top. This is to avoid super-heated air near the ceiling of a home engulfed in flames.

### **Fire Escape Plan:**

It is best to first call the Fire Department for advice on fire escape plans and then make security improvements with that escape plan in mind. Rehearse the escape plan, especially with children.

## **Ladders:**

Step and/or extension ladders should not be left outside the house unless secured to an anchor point with a chain and padlock. Similarly, ladders left unsecured in an open garage will afford easy access to a burglar. Do not leave ladders or any other easy forms of entry into your home.

## **Alarms**

Locking doors and windows are the first important steps in improving the security of your home. Entry is made difficult and often not much more is required to deter a burglar. For additional protection, an electronic alarm system would provide excellent back-up to these security devices. Homes that are left unoccupied for long periods of time or those situated in a location that prevents easy observation by neighbors are considered more vulnerable. An alarm system can provide valuable security and greater peace of mind for these homeowners. No other security system is as efficient (well, maybe a large dog) and practical for alerting neighbors and/or police that a break-in has occurred. The intruder is scared off for fear of being apprehended.

Alarm systems are offered in a variety of forms and the average homeowner may be somewhat confused when first exploring the alarm market. Some alarms are simple, self-contained units that are inexpensive and designed to suit a single door or window. These types of alarms alert someone who is home.

Other alarms take the form of more elaborate systems that can either be wired to a bell or horn. This sounds the alarm locally (in or immediately outside the house) or it can alert a central monitoring station. When selecting an alarm system, choose at least three reputable companies to get bids from and the following questions may assist you in selecting the company that is right for you.

### **Questions to Ask an Alarm Company Salesperson:**

1. Is the firm established, with a history of performance and service?
2. Does the alarm company have insurance to cover the cost of any damage to your property caused by the company during installation of the system?
3. Are the company and installers properly licensed and bonded? Is anything subcontracted (installation, service or monitoring)?
4. Is the alarm company a member of the Washington Burglary and Fire Alarm

### Association (800-248-9272)?

5. Is the system equipped with a battery back-up? Is the battery rechargeable?
6. Does the company offer a written guarantee? What is guaranteed and for how long? Are parts and labor covered?

Do your best to prevent false alarms. Make sure everyone in your home understands how to use the system. Responses to false alarms draw from limited resources and can pose risks to the community when emergency vehicles are responding. If you have questions regarding false alarms, call 425-233-6420.

### **Block Watch:**

You and your neighbors can prevent crime within your community and make it a safer, more secure place to live. Even though today's lifestyles sometimes make it difficult to be as neighborly as we'd like, being a good neighbor is one of the best ways to prevent crime. Neighbors can be your best protection when they band together to look out for each other's interests.

### **What is Block Watch?**

Block Watch is simply a program of neighbors watching other neighbors' property. At all times when you are at home, be alert to what's going on in your neighborhood. A police officer patrolling your community may not recognize a stranger in your yard, but your neighbors would.

### **How Does It Work?**

The program works through cooperation - Neighbors Watching out for Neighbors. Neighbors know who you are, and what type of car you own. They may be the first to notice a burglar at your window or door. Each neighbor can effectively watch those homes to each side, the front and back of his own home.

The Block Watch program is **not** intended to form citizen crime watch patrols or vigilante groups. You are only asked to report the situation to the police and let them handle it. It is not a good idea to confront any suspicious person(s) or attempt arrest yourself; your safety could be in jeopardy.

## Activities to Watch for:

- A scream from anywhere.
- Anyone removing valuables from homes or vehicles.
- Sound of broken windows or shattered wood.
- Persons going door to door.
- Strange vehicles parked at your neighbor's house.
- Vehicle passing by numerous times, suspiciously parked or constantly traveling back alleys.
- Anyone being forced into a car.
- Beam from flashlight or light in neighbor's home.
- Persons loitering around neighborhood.

If you see something suspicious, write down the description of any suspicious persons and get the **make, model, color, and license plate numbers** of strange vehicles. Call the police and other members of your block Watch group immediately. Don't assume someone else has called. Call the Police **immediately**, even if it isn't an immediate emergency.

## How to Report a Crime:

Law enforcement needs your help reporting crimes. Be alert wherever you are and learn to recognize crime. When you see or hear something that might indicate a criminal act is being committed, don't hesitate to call the police (911).

1. When reporting a crime, stay calm and state the problem.
2. Give the address where the emergency is occurring—**full address and nearest cross street**.
3. Describe the offender—report the suspect's **race, sex, age, height, weight, build, complexion, hair color, eye color, clothing, and/or any miscellaneous identifying marks such as tattoos, scars, etc.**
4. **Let the police dispatcher control the conversation.** Answer all questions to ensure the best response.

During a 911 call, if you wish to remain anonymous, give your name to the operator and then request anonymity.

## What Else Can You Do?

Make the effort to become acquainted with your neighbors. Exchange work and vacation schedules as well as contact information with neighbors you trust so you can keep an eye on each other's homes. If you know that your neighbor is away and you see an obvious invitation to a burglar, correct it. Close the open garage door and remove the accumulation of newspapers from the doorstep, then contact your neighbor to let them know what you did, if possible.

## How to Develop the Program:

To develop a Block Watch program in your neighborhood, contact the Medina Police Department at 425-233-6420.

## Burglary Prevention List:

### Outside Perimeter:

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| Y | N | Do you lock your porch and garage?  |
| Y | N | Do you lock your doors when away from home for short periods of time such as a few hours? For long periods such as a number of days or weeks? |
| Y | N | Do you lock the doors out of your view when working in the yard?  |
| Y | N | Do you avoid leaving keys hidden near access doors?   |
| Y | N | Do you leave notes on the door to indicate your absence?  |
| Y | N | Are your windows fitted with locks and do you lock them?  |
| Y | N | Are sliding doors and windows secured with a track pin or Charlie Bar?  |
| Y | N | Do you keep tools, ladders, etc., in places inaccessible to potential burglars?   |
| Y | N | Do you store lawn mowers, snow blowers, gas barbecues, etc., out of sight when not in use?  |
| Y | N | Do you light the outside of your home to discourage prowling or loitering?  |
| Y | N | When you move to a new residence do you hire a reliable locksmith to re-key all locks?  |
| Y | N | Do you change your locks immediately if your keys are lost or stolen?   |

### Inside Security:

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| Y | N | Do you refuse to provide personal information over the phone or internet?         |
| Y | N | Do you avoid leaving valuables or large amounts of cash at home?                  |
| Y | N | Do you shred or burn all receipts or documents with personal information on them? |

### **Vacation Security:**

- Y     N     Do you notify a neighbor of your travel plans and give a key with a request for a periodic house check? Or do you communicate with Medina's own Crime Watch program to do so?
- Y     N     Do you leave window shades in the normal position?
- Y     N     Do you cancel all deliveries?
- Y     N     Do you make arrangements for your yard to be kept up and any mail or brochures to be picked up?
- Y     N     Is your mail box a locking mail box so it is inaccessible to others?

***IF YOUR ANSWER IS NO TO ANY OF THE ABOVE, YOU MAY WANT TO IMPROVE YOUR SECURITY.***

### **PERSONAL SAFETY:**

Most crimes are crimes of opportunity. The key to staying safe from assault or robbery is to avoid places or activities that provide a criminal the opportunity to commit a crime against you. Likewise, the best way to avoid domestic assault is to take steps to limit the attacker's opportunity to get away with the crime.

Probably the least expensive measure you can take to protect yourself against crime is to incorporate certain habits into your daily routine that make you and your family less vulnerable. Adopt a security-conscious lifestyle. The best prevention is precaution. A basic rule is to stay alert to your surroundings. Trust your instincts. If you feel uncomfortable in a place or situation, leave!

Evaluate the extent to which you lead a security-conscious lifestyle by taking the following survey:

#### **YOUR Personal Safety Checklist:**

##### **In the Home:**

- Y     N     Do you keep doors and windows locked at all times?
- Y     N     Do you have a peephole or wide angle viewer so that you clearly can see who is outside without having to open the door?
- Y     N     Do you always verify a person's identification before opening your door?
- Y     N     If a stranger asks to use your phone; do you refuse to let them into your home and offer to make the call yourself?

- Y N Do you use your first initials only in telephone directories, on mailboxes, etc.?
- Y N Do you refuse to reveal personal information to anyone on the phone, at your door or on the internet?
- Y N Do you always have your keys ready when approaching your home?
- Y N Do you always have your keys ready when approaching your car?
- Y N If you return home to find windows and doors tampered with, would you avoid entering and go to a neighbor's house to call the police?
- Y N Is your mail box a locking mail box?
- Y N If your mail box is not locking; do you remove incoming mail immediately and always take outgoing mail to a secure mail drop?

**Telephone Answering / Internet Use:**

- Y N Do you teach family members not to give personal or family information to strangers over the phone or internet?
- Y N Do you record only non-specific messages on your answering machine and avoid messages like “we'll be back at 7 o'clock on Sunday”?
- Y N If you receive an obscene or threatening phone call or email message, would you call the police?
- Y N Do you monitor your child’s computer and television use, only allowing computers and TV’s in common areas, not bedrooms?

**On the Go:**

- Y N Do you plan in advance to use the safest route to your destination?
- Y N Do you choose busy, well-lit streets?
- Y N Do you avoid routes that pass by high-risk areas, i.e., vacant lots, alleys?
- Y N Do you avoid isolated bus stops?
- Y N Do you walk facing traffic so you can see approaching cars?
- Y N Do you walk near the curb to avoid the element of surprise or someone hiding between shrubs or in a doorway?
- Y N Do you stay out of reach if someone in a vehicle stops to ask directions?
- Y N Are you wary of approaching strangers, ear phones can hinder this.
- Y N If you continue to be followed, do you flee to the nearest safe place?
- Y N Do you try to get a description of the person and/or vehicle following you?
- Y N Do you avoid hitchhiking?
- Y N Do you avoid carrying large sums of money in your purse or wallet?
- Y N Do you carry your purse close to your body, without wrapping the straps around your arm or hand?
- Y N Do you avoid leaving a purse unattended, even for a moment?
- Y N Do you avoid displaying large amounts of cash in public?

### **In Your Car:**

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| Y | N | Do you always lock your car doors while driving?  |
| Y | N | Do you keep windows rolled up whenever possible?  |
| Y | N | Do you avoid picking up hitchhikers?  |
| Y | N | Do you keep your car in good running order to avoid break down in dangerous areas?  |
| Y | N | Do you look for well-lit areas to park your car?  |
| Y | N | Do you always lock your car when it is parked and not leave valuables in it?  |
| Y | N | Do you look around the car before you get out, especially at night or in deserted areas such as underground parking lots? |
| Y | N | When returning to your car, do you have your keys in hand?  |
| Y | N | Do you look in the back seat before getting into the car?   |
| Y | N | If you are being followed, do you avoid going home and go to the nearest place of safety instead?                         |

When faced with danger, trust yourself. Stay as calm as possible. Try to not panic and evaluate your options. There is no one right way to respond to a confrontation. Every situation is different. The response depends upon the circumstances - location of the attack, your personal resources, the characteristics of the assailant, and the presence of weapons.

There are many strategies that are effective, but you must rely on your own judgments. Various forms of responding are as follows, but again do whatever it takes to save yourself - the biggest goal is to get away and get safe.

- **Screaming to attract attention**
- **Distraction and then fleeing**
- **Verbal assertiveness**
- **Stalling for time**
- **Negotiating**

Once you are able to get away, call 911 immediately.

### **Child Safety:**

#### **Helpful Rules to Keep Young People Safe:**

Most parents want to educate their children about sexual abuse, but they don't know how. These guidelines will help parents teach their children how to keep safe.

Remember, you can't tell a child too much. Knowledge doesn't stimulate inappropriate behavior - ignorance does. Parents who talk openly with their children will be "approachable". Children will feel free to bring their worries and concerns to them in the future.

- RULE # 1** Never Touch Weapons – tell an adult if you see a weapon on the ground
- RULE # 2** Call 911 if you have a people emergency – for pet emergencies call 206-296-PETS. Cell phones, push “on” button, press “911”, then press send or talk (the green button) to get help
- RULE # 3** Never talk to strangers. A stranger is someone you don’t know - they could look nice. Never leave a store, get in a car, or go into a stranger's house. Tell an adult if a stranger contacts you. This includes the internet. Children should not be talking to people over the internet that “YOU” don’t know. Additionally, computers and TV should only be in common areas and their use monitored by you.
- RULE # 4** Use the Buddy System – never go anywhere by yourself.
- RULE # 5** If lost in a store, go to someone that works there – someone who wears a uniform or nametag. If lost in the woods, stay put and yell for help. Don’t try to find the trail - you will get lost even more.
- RULE # 6** Don’t put anything in your mouth without asking for permission first
- RULE # 7** Always ask for permission before going anywhere
- RULE # 8** Tell someone you trust if someone gives you a bad touch – bad touch is when someone touches you in your private parts, where your bathing suit covers, by someone other than a doctor, nurse or parents when you are sick.

**The Child Safety Checklist:**

\*some of these questions will only apply to children of certain age groups

- Y N Does your child know what to do if lost?
- Y N Have you discussed with your children what should be done if they find themselves at a questionable party (i.e., where there are drugs, alcohol,

- and/or other kids under the influence)?
- Y N Do you know your child's friends and their parents?
  - Y N Have you physically checked out the facilities your child attends such as day care or school, sports facilities or other play areas?
  - Y N Can you account for your child's whereabouts hourly?
  - Y N Have you discussed with your child who he/she can call if they need help?
  - Y N Have you ever done any public transportation training with your child?
  - Y N Do you know specifically how much money your child has to spend?
  - Y N In the presence of your child, do you display a positive attitude towards people in authority: police, school administrators, and teachers?
  - Y N Is your home a gathering place for kids?
  - Y N Do you really listen and spend time with your child?
  - Y N Does your child know how and where to reach you at any time?

## **Domestic and Dating Violence Information**

**RCW 10.99.030 (7)** “If you are the victim of domestic violence, you can ask the city or county prosecuting attorney to file a criminal complaint. You also have the right to file a petition in superior, district, or municipal court requesting an order for protection from domestic abuse which could include any of the following: (a) An order restraining your abuser from further acts of abuse; (b) an order directing your abuser to leave your household; (c) an order preventing your abuser from entering your residence, school, business, or place of employment; (d) an order awarding you or the other parent custody of or visitation with your minor child or children; and (e) an order restraining your abuser from molesting or interfering with minor children in your custody. The forms you need to obtain a protection order are at the locations below. Information about shelters and alternatives to domestic violence is available from a statewide twenty-four-hour toll-free line at **1-800-562-6025**.

***Medina City Hall and Police are located at:  
501 Evergreen Point Road, Medina, WA 98039***

<b>Emergency – Police / Fire / Medical</b>	<b>911</b>
Police Non-Emergency	425-233-6420
Police Records	425-233-6420

**There is NO cost to file a protection Domestic Violence Protection Order  
Protection Orders available at:**

**Kirkland Municipal Court**  
11740 NE 118th St  
Kirkland, WA 98034  
Phone: (425) 587-3160

## **PERSONAL PROPERTY PROTECTION:**

There is an alarming growth in the number of thefts of personal property, especially in relation to identity theft. Although many citizens are insured against theft of personal property, when someone takes our identity, it can be a lengthy and painful process to recover from.

In order to protect your personal items, a number of tips are available to reduce the likelihood of having valuable items and information stolen:

- Use locking mechanisms on your mailbox to prevent identity theft
- Place sensitive information (birth certificates, passports, social security information) in a heavy locking safe hidden somewhere inside of your home
- Don't keep personal information, valuables, or large amounts of money in plain site (i.e., on tables or desks, visible in your car, etc.)
- Record serial numbers and descriptions for highly valuable items such as electronics, laptops, cell phones, cameras, jewelry, etc.

TrackMole has recently teamed up with law enforcement agencies across Washington State and is a free service that helps recover lost and stolen items, as well as property left behind. It helps police departments and others identify owners of lost and stolen properties by using the serial numbers from devices. By going to [trackmole.com](http://trackmole.com), create a profile where you can record name, make, model, and serial numbers of each of your valuable items so if they are ever lost or stolen, they can be easily searched through TrackMole to recover them. If you find someone else's property, that serial number can also be run through TrackMole and if registered with the program, can be easily returned to the owner.

## **Auto Theft Prevention:**

Auto theft is a widespread crime that affects the whole community. Higher insurance rates, property damage and possible injuries and loss of life from accidents are the results – it is a billion dollar a year crime. The thieves' motives are joy-riding, transportation or profit (either selling the vehicle or stripping the parts).

You can reduce the risk of theft of your unattended car, its parts or contents by observing certain precautions.

- Do not leave cars unlocked, **especially** with keys in the ignition. **Always** lock your car and take the keys with you.
- Do not leave cars with the engine running, even if you only want to leave it for a

minute

- Do not leave valuables in your car, especially in plain sight. Oftentimes, cars are broken into because of items that are visible from outside of the car
- Do not keep identification tags on your keys or key rings—thieves can use it to access your residence
- Do not leave check books, credit cards, or personal information in your car
- Park in well-lit and busy areas whenever possible

### **Identity Theft:**

Identity theft, or identity fraud, is the taking of a victim's identity to obtain credit and credit cards from banks and retailers, steal money from a victim's existing accounts, apply for loans, establish accounts with utility companies, rent an apartment, file bankruptcy, or obtain a job using the victim's name. Thousands of dollars can be stolen without the victim knowing about it for months, or even years.

The imposter obtains your social security number, your birth date, and other identifying information such as your address and phone number. With this information and a fake driver's license, they can apply in person for instant credit or through the mail posing as you. They often claim they have moved and provide their own address. Once the first account is opened, they can continue to add to their credibility.

Information is obtained from information you may have thrown away, such as utility bills, credit card slips, and other documents.

### **To prevent IDENTIFY THEFT from happening to you:**

- **Do not give out personal information over the phone, through the mail, or over the Internet unless you have initiated the contact or know whom you're dealing with.** Identity thieves will pose as bank representatives, Internet service providers, and even government officials to get you to reveal identifying information.
- **Shred all documents, including pre-approved credit applications received in your name, insurance forms, bank checks and statements you are discarding, and other financial information.**
- **Do not use your mother's maiden name, your birth date, the last four digits of your social security number, or a similar series of numbers as a password for anything.**

- **Minimize the identification information and the number of cards you carry. Take what you'll actually need. Don't carry your social security card, birth certificate, or passport, unless necessary.**
- **Do not put your social security number on your checks or your credit receipts.** If a business requests your social security number, give them an alternate number and explain why. If a government agency requests your social security number, there must be a privacy notice accompanying the request.
- **Do not put your telephone number on checks.**
- **Be careful using ATMs and phone cards.** Someone may look over your shoulder and get your PIN numbers, thereby gaining access to your accounts.
- **Make a list of all your credit card account numbers and bank account numbers with customer service phone numbers, and keep it in a safe place.**
- **When you order new credit cards in the mail or previous ones have expired, watch the calendar to make sure you get the card within the appropriate time.** If the card is not received within that time, call the credit card grantor immediately to find out if the card has been sent. If you don't receive the card, check to make sure a change of address was not filed.
- **Do not put your credit card number on the Internet unless it is encrypted on a secured site.**
- **Pay attention to your billing cycles.** Follow up with creditors if bills don't arrive on time. A missing credit card bill could mean an identity thief has taken over your credit card account and changed your billing address.
- **Cancel all credit cards that you have not used in the last six months.** Open credit is a prime target.
- **Order your credit report at least twice a year.** Reports should be obtained from all three major sources (Equifax, Experian, or TransUnion).

## WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE A VICTIM OF IDENTITY THEFT

1. Report the incident to the police. (911)
2. Contact your bank or credit card companies.
3. Contact the following credit reporting agencies:

It is important to include your social security number and current address when writing to the following three credit bureaus:

- **Equifax:** <http://www.equifax.com>  
P.O. Box 740241  
Atlanta, GA 30374  
Order Credit Report: 1-800-685-1111  
Report Fraud: 1-800-525-6285
- **Experian:** <http://www.experian.com>  
National Consumer Assistance Center  
P.O. Box 2002  
Allen, TX 75013  
Order Credit Report: 1-888-EXPERIAN  
Report Fraud: 1-888-EXPERIAN
- **Trans Union:** <http://www.transunion.com>  
P.O. Box 2000  
Chester, PA 19022  
Order Credit Report: 1-800-888-4213  
Report Fraud: 1-800-680-7289

### **Social Security Administration**

E-Mail: [oig.hotline@ssa.gov](mailto:oig.hotline@ssa.gov)  
Fraud Hotline: 800-269-0271  
FAX: 1-410-597-0118  
Mail: P.O. Box 17768, Baltimore, MD 21235

### **U.S. Postal Service:**

If theft of U.S. Mail is involved, or a fraudulent change of address has been filed, contact the U.S. Postal Inspector in your area or on-line at:

<http://www.usps.com/postalinspectors>

## **Department of Motor Vehicles:**

If a false driver's license was obtained in your name, or someone is using your driver's license number, call 360-664-8885, or:

Department of Licensing  
Driver Responsibility Fraud Unit  
P.O. Box 9030  
Olympia, WA 98507-9030  
E-Mail: [drvfraud@dol.wa.gov](mailto:drvfraud@dol.wa.gov)  
Or on-line at: <http://www.wa.gov/dol>

Write to Direct Marketing Association, Mail Preference Service, PO Box 9008, Farmingdale, NY 11735 to remove your name from direct mail lists.

## **Federal Trade Commission:**

Accepts complaints from ID theft victims: <http://www.consumer.gov/idtheft>

- Identity Theft Hotline: 1-877-ID THEFT
- To request the booklet "ID theft, When Bad Things Happen to Your Good Name":  
Call 1-877-FTC-HELP or mail a request to:  
FTC, Consumer Response Center  
600 Pennsylvania Ave. N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20580

## **Washington State Attorney General's Office**

Posts detailed information about ID theft on-line at:

<http://www.wa.gov/ago/consumer/idtheft>

## **Consumer Resource Centers**

Provide statewide ID Theft experts who can refer you to the proper authorities and who can assist consumers and businesses regarding the new law. Call 1-800-551-4636.

## **How the Law Applies to Victims of Identity Theft:**

**Court Orders to Correct Public Record:** Upon a criminal conviction, the law authorizes the courts to issue an order for the victim to use in correcting public records that

contain false information due to the theft of identity. For example - arrest records in the victim's name that was the result of the defendant using the victim's name at the time of arrest.

**Consumer Protection Remedies:** The criminal provisions also constitute violations of the Consumer Protection Act (CPA), and victims and the Attorney General's Office (AGO) can pursue civil actions against the perpetrators using the protections of the CPA (RCW 9.35.800). Also, the following civil provisions all contain CPA remedies whereby the victims and/or the AGO can enforce compliance.

**Businesses Required to Provide Information to Victims (RCW 9.35.050):** The law requires businesses that have information relevant to the identity theft to provide that information to a victim once the victim provides positive proof of their identity and a copy of their police report. For example, the victim now has the legal right to require a business to hand over their records about the credit account the ID thief opened in the victim's name. Those records often contain critical information the victim needs in order to prove they were not the person who is responsible for that account. It is also information the victim can then provide to law enforcement to assist them in their investigation. The business may require the victim to provide all or some of the following items before complying with this section:

- A copy of a government-issued photo
- Identification card
- A copy of a filed police report evidencing the victim's claim; and a written statement from the State Patrol verifying the victim has completed the fingerprint verification program under RCW 43.43.760.

**Blocking Bad Information from Credit Reports (RCW 19.182.160):** Under the law, a victim of identity theft can block any adverse credit reports resulting from the crime by filing the police report of the crime with the credit-reporting agency and supplying the agency with other proof of identification similar to those above. Provisions are made for denial and removal of the block in cases of fraud or error. The effect is that the victim's credit record is restored to reflect only the victim's true credit history.

**Limitations Imposed on Collection Agencies (RCW 19.16.250):** A collection agency may not call a debtor (victim) more than one time in 180 days in order to collect on debts associated with fraudulent checks as long as the victim forwards information regarding the alleged theft to the collection agency. The victim must provide the collection

agency with the relevant police report and proof of the victim's identity similar to the provisions above.

**The Stop Fraud Network:** The Stop Fraud Network is a fraud prevention program designed to teach senior citizens how to protect themselves from con artists. Sponsored by the Washington State Attorney General's Office, this program also encourages senior citizens to call a toll-free fraud hot-line when they become aware of fraudulent activity. This enables law enforcement to identify fraud and act quickly. For more information about the Stop Fraud Network, call the Stop Fraud Hot-line at (800) 622-0033.

**REFERENCES:**

Washington Attorney General	800-551-4636
Washington Crime Prevention	509-527-9290

**WHEN A DISASTER OCCURS, ACTIVATE THIS RESPONSE PLAN:**

**1. Take care of yourself, family, home and pets.**

- Dress for safety: heavy rubber soled shoes, leather gloves, hard hat or bicycle helmet, flashlight
- Shut off natural gas if you smell gas.
- Turn off electricity at circuit box
- Shut off water at main house valve, hot water tank and toilets, or main valve at street. (You don't want back flow to contaminate your usable water)
- Call out of state contact to check on family members not present and give update. (texting on cell phones may sometimes work when a regular cell phone call wont)
- Tune in battery operated radio to emergency radio station listed below
- Post **OK/HELP** card in window or front door so it is easily visible from street.

**2. Check on Neighbors to see if OK. Assist displaced neighbors to a safe neighbor's house.**

**Emergency Information**

<b>Emergency</b>	<b>911</b>
<b>Non-Emergency Police</b>	<b>425-233-6420</b>
<b>Non-Emergency Fire</b>	<b>425-452-6892</b>
<b>Puget Sound Energy</b>	<b>1-888-225-5773</b>

## RESOURCE PAGE

Emergency – Police / Fire / Medical	911
Police non-emergency	425-233-6420
Fire Business	425-452-6892
City Hall	425-233-6400
Kirkland Municipal Court	425-587-3160
Maintenance / Streets / Garbage	425-233-6400
Business Licenses	425-233-6400
Building Department	425-233-6400
Eastside Domestic Violence Crisis Line	425-746-1940 or 1-800-827-8840
Animal Control	206-296-PETS

Medina City Hall and Police  
501 Evergreen Point Road, Medina, WA 98039

City Hall is open                      Monday - Friday                      8:30 am – 5:00 pm

For Police Records information:  
<http://www.medina-wa.gov/records>